



## **A declaration of Love as counter Strategy**

### **A fantastic analysis of the management of work, time, and teachers**

Vaaben, Nana Katrine; Bjerg, Helle

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# A declaration of love as counter-strategy - A fantasmatic analysis of the management of work, time and teachers

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**EGOS 2014**

**Sub-theme 26: Emotions and (the Limits of) Institutional Control**

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Helle Bjerg, PhD, Researcher, hbj@ucc.dk

Nana Vaaben, PhD, Researcher, nava@ucc.dk

Dept. of Research and Development

University College Capital (UCC), Copenhagen

## **Abstract**

This paper presents a first attempt to analyze teachers' accounts of a national lockout of almost all teachers in the Danish public school system in spring 2013. We set up an analytical framework drawing on the reading of Lacan by Glynos and Howard in their conceptualization of different form of logics as well as Zizeks understanding of ideology as an interplay between the Real, the symbolic and fantasy. Our point is to pursue an analysis of the affective effects of the lockout in the sense that we look at how the conflict not only within a political logic or symbolic order, but also within a logic of enjoyment. As the paper represents our first reading of our empirical data within an ideological or fantasmatic perspective, we hope to discuss and develop the analysis further on the basis of our presentation at EGOS 2014.

## **Introduction**

In spring 2013 an unprecedented historical incident took place in Denmark: Basically all teachers working at public schools were locked out from their work as a culmination of a month long conflict between the teachers' union (DLF) and the association of municipalities (KL) representing the employer side. The core issue of the conflict was the claim of the KL to

restructure the working hour agreement of the teachers in order for the teachers to teach more lessons per week. The lockout lasted almost a month during which the major part pupils from grade 1 to 10 could not attend school. As such the conflict not only affected the teachers, but also society as a whole, as thousands of parents had to find alternative ways of taking care of their children while schools were closed. Furthermore the conflict not only played out between the teachers and their employees within formalized spaces of negotiation. It also spurred of major campaigns in the media from both sides in order to mobilize public opinion. One of the strategies of the teachers was to arrange local demonstrations all over the country. And during these demonstrations teachers carrying bill boards with slogans like 'We want to teach!' or 'We love our job!' and 'We love our pupils' became a common sight all over Denmark, especially outside schools and along major roads where people would pass on their way to work.

This paper is set off by the question of how a declaration of love for work became a feasible strategy for the teachers' response to the lockout. Furthermore we try to see how the teachers' experiences of the lockout are entangled with their response to the new regulation of working hours and a major school reform, which were both implemented by law in the political aftermath of the lock out. We shall be addressing this question by introducing a theoretical framework based on a Lacanian approach to ideology as developed by Jason Glynos and David Howarth (2007) and Slavoj Zizek (1989). Our point is that in order to understand the effects of the lockout we need to address the ideological underpinnings of the conflict. The Lacanian approach to ideology allows us discuss the conflict both within a political (Glynos & Howard 2007) or a symbolic or discursive realm (Zizek 1989), and in a fantasmatic perspective. We introduce concepts of fantasy, enjoyment and desire into the analysis of qualitative interviews with primarily teachers on their experience of the lockout and its aftermath. Hereby we aim at exploring not only the legal effects of the lock out – such a new working hour regulation, but even more so the affects of the lockout, as the affective responses to the lockout seem to have long lasting effects on how the teachers respond to both the new working hour regulation as well as a major school reform implemented in the wake of the lockout.

## Method and design

This paper presents the preliminary findings of a larger qualitative study, and it draws upon interviews of all in all 23 teachers, school principals and administrative representatives of municipalities. The interviews were semi-structured and focused on questions relating to the lockout, the new working hour regulation as well as the approaching school reform. This paper primarily draws on the interviews with the 12 teachers. The study at large aims at following the implementation and development of the new working hour regulation over time, and how new forms of managing time and work affect the construction of both professional identity and school leadership within the realm of a major school reform.

## Theoretical Approach

Before going into more detail about the empirical findings, we will shortly present our theoretical approach. We wish to address the political struggles and future imaginaries embedded in the conflict, and here we use an analytical approach developed by Jason Glynos and David Howarth. Coming out of the Essex School, they suggest analyzing regimes of practices, including the political attempts to transform or stabilize them by using 'logics' (2007,15). This implies not simply characterizing a social practice or a regime of practices, it also implies trying to explain it by deciphering the rules and ontological presuppositions that render a certain social practice possible and intelligible. To go beyond mere description of social practices, they suggest using logics in different dimensions, and they point to 'fantasmatic logics' as a certain form of ideological force, that legitimizes and encourages political action to try to change or maintain social practices:

Fantasy operates so as to conceal or close off the radical contingency of social relations. It does this through a fantasmatic narrative or logic that promises a fullness-to-come once a named or implied obstacle is overcome – the beatific dimension of fantasy – or which foretells of disaster if the obstacle proves insurmountable, which might be termed the horrific dimension of fantasy (Glynos and Howarth 2007:147)

In this way, they do not see fantasmatic logics as false pictures or illusions, to be pointed out in order to come up with a more realistic interpretation. They are not interested in discussing what is real, and what is illusory. Rather they see fantasy as doing its ideological work by delivering complexity-reducing representations of the world, representations that can take the form of narratives with good guys and bad guys in it, and these representations of the world

are also part of the world they represent, as they are used as reference and legitimization to act upon the world in order to reach an imagined goodness-to-come (Vaaben 2013).

In order to explore how ideology ‘works’, and not least how the teachers’ involved are affected by the interplay of identification, enjoyment and desire within the lockout and its aftermath we turn to Slavoj Žižek and his Lacanian reading of the interplay of fantasy, enjoyment and desire. Žižek also points to the function of fantasy of concealing, not alone contingency, but also the inherent antagonism of the social (Žižek 1989:21). The basic idea is that any society or any formation of the social produces a surplus, something which cannot be contained, nor symbolized in the social. However this ‘rest’ is not a threat, but rather a precondition of how the social function with a reference to and ideological fantasy of a possible wholeness which promises to give access to enjoyment:

The last support of the ideological effect [...] is the non-sensical, pre-ideological kernel of enjoyment. In ideology ‘all is not ideology (that is, ideological meaning)’, but it is this very surplus which is the last support of ideology’ (Žižek 1989:124)

Within this framework two analytical moves are implied in the analysis of ideology: Firstly a discursive or symbolic reading and deconstruction of how an ideological field rests upon the network of floating signifiers tied to a particular nodal point fixating meaning. Secondly a reading trying to follow the ‘logic of enjoyment’

The other aims at extracting the kernel of enjoyment, at articulating the way in which - beyond the field of meaning, but at the same time internal to it - an ideology implies, manipulates, produces a pre-ideological enjoyment structured in fantasy (Žižek 1989; 125)

In the following we shall apply these analytical moves. In order to establish an understanding of the ideological underpinnings of the lockout we start by analyzing the campaign of the association of the municipalities (KL) and how this campaign put forward not only a political or discursive logic of normalization, but also rested on a fantasmatic logic producing particular fantasies of what should be overcome and what should be pursued within the implementation of a new working hour regulation. Here we primarily use the approach of Howard and Glynos. In order to approach the question of the affective effects of the lockout we turn an analysis of the teachers’ experiences of the lockout and its aftermath. Here we primarily draw on Žižek’s reading of Lacan in a closer analysis of the logic of enjoyment, both as it plays out within the approach of the KL, but also how it works upon the teachers in as a possible re-ordering of fantasy, enjoyment and (professional) desire.

## Normalizing the productivity of “teachers as such”

In the winter of 2013 the Danish Ministry of Finance made an announcement in relation to the upcoming collective negotiations between unions and employers in the public sector. The announcement referred to the economic crisis and the necessity of holding back on wage expectations. The document addressed the conditions of high school teachers employed by the state, but it also outlined a more general claim for the restructuring of the working conditions for “teachers as such”:

“The teachers’ working hour rules are quite extraordinary, and the problems are basically the same in private schools, upper secondary schools, adult education and primary and lower secondary public schools: You have to reach an agreement with the union, which binds the use of the working time” (Finansministeriet 2012:1).

The ministry argued that not only were teachers working according to extraordinary rules, why they needed to be “normalized”. It also argued that the teaching resources were due to these extraordinary working hour rules not used effectively and flexibly enough, and the explicit goal was to ensure a tighter correlation between wage and productivity:

“Today there is a high degree of automatization in the wage levels in the state which weakens the correlation between wage and productivity. That way of regulating is outdated. Employees in the state have automatically and without counter requirements been given a wage that followed the wage development in the private sector, why wage have become detached from performance (Finansministeriet 2012:2).

The ministry tracks the problem back to the unions having previously negotiated “boxes of time”, so that all teachers would in principle receive the same amount of time for teaching a lesson irrespective of its kind. According to the Ministry this arrangement “locks” the ways in which time can be used, and a list of examples of inefficient time use is attached to the document. So is a list of “extraordinary privileges” which certain groups of teachers (especially teachers over 60 years) have accumulated over time. A much better solution to the question of working hours, the Ministry argues, would be to have rules putting “outer limits” to the working hours, but rules that will not bind the time within these outer limits to be used on particular tasks or groups (Finansministeriet 2012).

A few months later, the union of teachers in primary school (DLF) should to negotiate *their* conditions with the association of the municipalities (KL). By then, the public debate for or against “teachers as such” and their possible privileges, extraordinary rules and ways of working, had already launched in the media, and the debate was loud and fierce. When KL

announced their demands, they did not use expressions like 'normalization', 'privileges' or 'productivity' (KL, 2013), but the demands were more or less the same as in the document from the Ministry of Finance; abolition of special arrangements for senior teachers, 'outer limits' to the working hours, and giving local leaders the right to prioritize teachers' time into more teaching lessons. This was formulated as giving back the managerial right to the local leaders – '*just like in any other working place*' (KL, 2013, 1). Furthermore KL argued that the concerns of the teachers in relation to the particular character of teaching, and the their fear of 'boundless work' had been taken into consideration in a number of ways, so that teachers would have the '*possibility of working more during the periods where children go to school, and enjoy the flexibility of working less during school vacations*' (KL, 2013, 2).

### Teachers' jouissance

The confrontation of the opposed parties was not only played out in closed and formalized negotiations, but also in major media campaigns. Here KL presented major advertisement with their calculations of the amount of teaching hours provided by an average teacher a week. In an ideological perspective, however, this move towards objectification or naturalisation can be seen as highly ideological. Here our claim is that the political argument of the need to normalise the 'abnormal' working hour-regulations not only rests upon the allegedly objective calculations of working hours and productivity. Rather it also rested heavily upon an othering of the teachers 'as such' playing on a fantasy on the enjoyment of the Other:

In short, what really gets on our nerves, what really bothers us about the "other", is the peculiar way he organizes his jouissance (the smell of his food, his noisy songs and dances, his strange manners, his attitude to work - in the racist perspective, the "other" is either a workaholic stealing our jobs or an idler living on our labor. (Zizek, 1992, 165)

Zizek points out how the fantasy of the enjoyment of the Other lies at the heart of racism and ethnic tension. It is, in that sense, a fantasy of how the identity and sustainability of a particular social order is at stake and threatened by the Other and his illicit enjoyment. As such the enjoyment of the Other not only raises irritation. The Other is also produced as the symptom which stands in the way of the full realisation or harmonious realisation of the social:

Far from being the positive cause of social negativity, the 'Jew' is a point at which social negativity as such assumes positive existence. In this way we can articulate another formula of the basic procedure of the 'criticism of ideology' (...): to detect, in a given ideological edifice, the element which represents within it its own impossibility. Society is not prevented from achieving its full identity because of Jews: it is prevented by its own antagonistic nature, but its own immanent blockage, and it 'projects' this internal negativity into the figure of the 'Jew' in other words, what is excluded from the Symbolic (from the frame of the corporatist socio-symbolic order) returns in the Real as a paranoid construction of the 'Jew'. (Žižek 1989; 127)

Within this line of thinking we want to suggest an analysis in which the fantasmatic or ideological underpinnings of the conflict, not only rests on the discursive or symbolic production of the teachers working hour agreement as abnormal. Even more so it produces the teachers 'as such' as the Other enjoying short and flexible working days and long summer holiday. This logic of enjoyment not only creates envy, it might also be said to produce the inefficiency of teachers as the symptom which stands in the way of realising or completing a school in which 'everybody becomes as able as they can'. This formulation does not stem from the negotiations of the working hour regulations, but from the purpose of the major school reform, which was politically negotiated and adopted simultaneously with the conflict. The aim of the school reform is to improve performance in the Danish school system, both in terms of measurable learning outcomes, and in terms of realising the full potential of all pupils. Formally the negotiations of the school reform and the conflict between the teachers' union (DLF) and the employers' (KL) were not related, as Denmark has a long tradition of an independent system of negotiations pertaining to labour legislations. Still the school reform was based on an implementation of longer school days, an increased number of lessons and intensified cooperation amongst the professionals. Therefore the reform presupposed a rearrangement of the regulation of working tasks and working hours of the teachers. When the social democratic government took the unprecedented step of terminating the lockout by installing the principles of working hour regulations by passing Law 409, which by and large followed the claims of KL, it was very hard not to link the implementation of the school reform with the new working conditions of the teachers.

Our point is that seen in an ideological perspective teachers and their enjoyment of work and time 'as such' was produced as the other of schooling. The conflict therefore not only was



related to the ‘normalisation’ of teachers’ working conditions, but also connected to the fantasy of a public school system where the inherent antagonism of the school as a system of differentiation (Bjerg 2011) could be overcome in the fantasy of a school realising (and fetishising) the full potential of all pupils.

### Love thy Other

Following this reading we shall suggest an approach understanding the lockout, not only as a juridical legitimate instrument pertaining to labour law, within but also as the othering of teachers within a fantasmatic realm. We shall pursue this point in two analytical steps: Firstly we look upon how the protest strategy of the teachers may support an ideological reading of the lockout as an ideological othering of the teachers within a logic of enjoyment. Secondly we approach the teachers’ accounts of the affective effects of the lockout by following their (hysterical) questioning of the Other and their fantasies of what the other wants.

First we turn to the initial question of how a declaration of love for work became a part of the strategy for the teachers’ collective protests during the lockout. This was literally the case when teachers all over the country participated in several demonstrations carrying billboards where they declared that they wanted to work; that they loved their work, as well as how they missed their pupils. We suggest reading these declarations of love as the teachers’ attempt to ‘argue’ within the logic of enjoyment of the lockout by trying to ‘normalise’ their own enjoyment and thereby make it not only recognizable, but also recognized. Again the gaze for whom these statements were meant, were not only the specific parties in the conflict, but just as much the gaze of on the one hand an unspecified ‘public opinion’. The statements did also seem to try to appeal to the bypassing public both as employees enjoying the normal and legitimate pleasures of (hard) work, but also as parents by declaring love for the children for whom the teachers claimed a shared responsibility and care.

It is, however, futile to argue with ideology, Žižek points out. When ideology has taken hold any ‘counterproof’ becomes a support, rather than a correction to the ideological fantasy of the other. Here any everyday experience of the ‘good Jew’ (or ‘the good teacher’ next door, might exactly become a proof of a Jewish conspiracy rather than the opposite, if the ideology of Anti-semitism has already gained a stronghold:

An ideology is really ‘holding us’ only when we do not feel any opposition between it and reality – that is, when the ideology succeeds in determining the mode of our everyday experience of reality if self. (Žižek 1989: 49)

To the extent that the fantasy of teachers’ illicit enjoyment has gained a stronghold, not only within the campaign of the KL, but also in the public opinion, no statement nor concrete experience of ‘the good teacher’ as a lovable hardworking person would be able to counter the imaginary and possible irritation of the enjoyment of daily flexibility and long summer holidays. It is hard to say whether the teachers’ declaration of love for their work changed any public votes in favour of their cause. Anyway when the lockout was terminated by Law 409 after almost three weeks, it relieved thousands of parents and families of the daily obstacle race on the issue of who should take care of their kids when school was closed.

### ‘Che vuoi?’

Even though the lockout was brought to an end, it seems that for some teachers it would not go away. One year after the lockout 1/3 of the teachers say that they have considered leaving their profession (Mandag Morgen may 2014). This number not only related to the lockout, but also to the uncertainty of what the new working hour regulation and the major school reform, both put in place by august 2014, will bring. In the following we shall look into our interviews with teachers in order to make a first exploration into how an ideological reading of the lockout may also be useful for understanding its affective effects, and how these are implied in the ways in which these teachers react to the approaching reforms.<sup>1</sup>. Empirically we focus on the teachers’ accounts of what the lockout meant, and not least what they see as the long term consequences of the lockout.

And the first analytical question we shall address is what it might mean to be ‘locked out’ in a Lacanian perspective. One teacher puts the experience of being locked out this way: *I think it was really strange not to be allowed to enter your working place, which I really care deeply about*. Being locked out does not only that access is forbidden to a working place which is otherwise embraced with a certain kind of ownership. It also means being barred from the enjoyment which you experience in relation to that place. Another teacher talks about the lockout as being deprived of your right to work, and not least, of your salary and the possible pleasures this can buy:

Personally I felt that I was deprived the right to go to work, and my wife also. And the lock-out cost us 40.000 Danish crowns, and it deprived us of our summer holiday. So there is an economical loss. And ... I don't know, but there is this ... humiliation, or I don't know what you feel, but you felt that the battle was over, before you even started, and everything was planned and they were just going to empty the teachers' cash box and thereby the wallet of me and my girlfriend. And that you were not really heard in the new proposal. And afterwards you have the feeling that there has been a masterplan or something (...) I don't think that it is the municipality or the school leadership as such in relation to the school. It is rather my political ego that has been weakened, or has been badly shaken. Confidence, you might say. I have felt rootless in the political life and (...) for the first time I voted blank at the municipal election.

On a symbolic level the lockout can be read as depriving the teachers of their symbolic identity as teachers. With the inspiration from Lacan, Žizek points out how upholding a certain symbolic or social identity comprises two forms of identification:

'Imaginary identification is identification with the image in which we appear likeable to ourselves, with the image representing 'what we would like to be', and symbolic identification, identification with the very place from where we are being observed, from where we look at ourselves, so that we appear to ourselves, likeable, worthy of love'. (Žizek 1989: 105)

The first point here is how positive or social identity rests upon the identification with a subject position within a social or symbolic framework: You are a teacher because you are interpellated to take up the subject position as a teacher. Within this framework being fired does not only mean the loss of a job and a steady income, it also means being barred from taking up your symbolic identity as a teacher. The second point is how imaginary identification rests upon the symbolic identification with the gaze of the Other, leading to the question *for whom is the subject enacting this role? Which gaze is considered when the subject identifies himself with a certain image?* (Žizek 1989: 105) Using this approach one might say that firing the teachers not only means depriving them of their official position as teachers. It also introduced a questioning as to which gaze to be considering when identifying oneself as a teacher, and even more so, how teacher identity is produced within this imaginary identification. The ideological campaign of the KL represented symbolic identification in which being a teacher' was identified as the symptom of schooling enjoying unproductive and illicit pleasures on the costs of the rest of society.

When the teacher above talks about the effects of the lock out, he points to how confidence is broke. The question is the confidence in whom? Who is the Other who deprives him from his symbolic identity as a teacher? It is not, he says, the local authorities represented through the

municipality or the school leadership. Rather it is the confidence in the symbolic Other with whom to identify as a political subject. As such it is the ‘faceless’ Other behind the other – someone with a master plan and a power to carry it out in a way which creates a feeling of being annulled, not only as a teacher, but as a political subject, where voting blank becomes the only possible reaction. By voting even when there is nothing to vote for, he upholds not only his subject position as a voter or political subject, he also keeps on sustaining the Other or the Law – even when he ‘knows’ that there is an – undemocratic – master plan (Žizek 1989: 29). This teacher is not the only one who fantasizes about whom the ‘faceless’ Other of the other might be:

“Well, I think it’s the politicians with Antorini [the minister of education] as the face, and then KL, and the municipality-people. Those faceless people in the municipality, that you don’t quite know who are.”

“The way I’ve heard it, it’s KL and... Well I don’t know...the bureaucrats in the municipality, those with the numbers, the black and white numbers, who have to make the tings add up, and who sit there merging schools”

In other versions the faceless other is identified as ‘the media’ or the public opinion at large, whereas the local school leaders are mainly distinguished from the Other which has thrown suspicion and disrespect upon the teachers. Theoretically the imaginaries of the Other is linked to the question of ‘what the Other wants’ And in the following we shall explore how the teachers’ response to the lockout and not least their imaginaries of being a teacher after the furture reforms may be read as echoes of the hysterical question of what the Other wants? followed by “*Why am I, what I’m supposed to be, why have I this mandate. Why am I what you [the big Other] are staying that I am?*” (Žizek 1989: 113) - or in another paraphrasing: f ‘what it is the Other sees in me which makes me ... at teacher’.

### Neither naked, nor dressed

The period of the lockout can be framed as a state of exemption marked by the symbolic death of the teachers. But the teachers were barred not only from work, from their salary, from their professional identity, but also from pursuing the enjoyments related to otherwise legitimate and even expected expressions of (true) love for their work and their pupils (Bramming & Johnsen 2011). Instead the lockout seems to offer new fantasies trying to fill the void in the Other whom apparently does not want the teachers to pursue the fantasies of

teaching, which they have hitherto engaged in. Pursued within a logic of enjoyment the lockout may also be seen as arising an immediate feeling of subversion or transgression of the Law through the enjoyment of pleasures which in a normal state of things would be seen as incidents of truancy and signs of laziness and, indeed, not wanting to work like anybody else. Here one teacher tells about her experience of meeting with her colleagues on a daily basis during the lockout:

“It looked a bit like a party [...] I think it was a real treat. Then we would drink coffee and have breakfast together, and some thought it was totally grotesque. [...] I remember how I was talking to people that I normally do not talk to. It was nice. In the beginning we sat...it was kind of surreal...and then: oh, well should we start making some teaching plans for next year?”

Here the lockout turns around the relationship between pleasure and duty: Doing your ‘duty’ suddenly means throwing a party when everybody else is at work, whereas following your desire for work is turned into a transgressive pleasure. Another teacher tells how he spent the lockout putting extra time into studying for a job-related course:

In retrospect I should not have done that, because I had working hours to do it [to take the course]. But I was happy I did, because that created a kind of daily round (...) At least I found out that I am not going into social welfare. Also because what you did [during the lockout] had nothing to do with working as a teacher at all. Then you sat there, discussing what to do. My opinion didn’t mean a thing. And just wearing a T-shirt saying “I am not allowed to work” or “Locked out” or whatever. I think it was a bad version of a carnival.

Giving up your everyday life – and your identity as a teacher is neither easy, nor pleasant. And this teacher comes close of pointing your how not working as a teacher means ‘being on welfare’ or rather being nobody at all, as he felt how his opinion on the whole issue and the reactions of protest also did not matter. Coining the lockout not only as a carnival, but even as a bad one of the sort is indeed fairly precise, if the definition of a ‘true’ carnival not only the temporary subversion of the relationship between duty and pleasure, but also of power relations. Moreover within the idea of transgression put forward by Žižek, it is not a threat, but a prerequisite to law:

Far from undermining the rule of Law its transgression in fact serves at its ultimate support. So it is not only that the transgression relies on, presupposed, the Law it transgresses; rather the reverse case is much more pertinent; *law itself relies on its inherent transgression*, so that when we suspend this transgression, the Law itself disintegrates (Žižek 1994; 77. Op cit. in Contu 2007; 5)

The only carnivalesque feature about the lockout might then be that temporarily the topside and the underside of Law has flipped. Still, this does not represent a threat to neither the Law

nor its fantasmatic support. Even when this and other teachers take up the position of the cynic – as he does both in relationship to his work, by stressing how teaching for him is not a vocation, but a way to earn money or by pointing out how democracy does not work and he finds the protesting futile, he still engages in the fantasies ‘behind the law’

What is it that the cynic does not put in question? The answer is clear: a cynic mocks the public Law from the position of its obscene underside, which consequently it leaves intact. Insofar as the enjoyment which permeates this obscene underside is structured in fantasies, one can also say that what the cynic leaves intact is the fantasy, the fantasmatic background of the public written ideological text (Žizek. 2005: 279).

Our point is that both within the protest strategies of the teachers, as well as their way of upholding their professional desires during the lockout, they remain faithful, if not to the Law, who has temporarily banned them from the teaching position, but to the fantasies of teaching. This also shows in the dilemmas of loyalty experienced by a female teacher, who were employed as civil servant, and therefore had to keep on working, while here colleagues were outside in the street:

“(…) personally I participated in the different actions when possible. And then there were all this...a bit of cheating, you might say: “Can you tell my math-students that they do not have to do this and that” because the ordinary mail correspondence was shut down”.

This teacher became a secret messenger between her fellow colleagues and their pupils, and the situation points to how a sign of professionalism suddenly was turned into a secret love affair. Also even her own way of working was cast in new light:

“I had to be loyal in the sense that when the children, whom I had to give special needs teaching were not present, I could not take up other working tasks. So I spend a LOT of time cleaning up papers and cupboards and drawers, because I would definitely not touch any work that I was not supposed to.”

Even if she is not locked out herself, she is still locked into a logic in which hitherto legitimate working tasks are turned illegitimate. On the other hand she still acts within the fantasy of what it means to be if not a good teacher, then a good worker, and feels obliged to make herself useful by spending her full working day at school. Therefore she has to act like in the saga about Kraka who were requested to appear neither naked nor dressed, neither satiated nor fasting, neither accompanied nor alone. Her solution is to spend her time neither working, nor idle, but cleaning up cupboards attempting to be useful without taking on professional duties related to teaching tasks which were would otherwise be taken care of by her colleagues.

In that sense, instead of turning things upside down, the lockout may be read as a fierce reinstatement of the Name of the Father: Through and through it is the Big Other – who keeps the keys to the school and to the symbolic identity of the teachers. And literally it is the Law in and of itself which finally intervenes in order to restore normalcy by ending the lockout with the reappointment of the teachers. Further more the strategy of the teacher is to remain in the field of vision of the big Other and fantasising about what the Other wants, in order to be both taken as decent workers and good and, not least, caring teachers. Finally the transgressive pleasures enjoyed during the lockout - in the form of pursuing professional duties – can exactly be interpreted as the kind of transgressive pleasures which the Law thrives on.

### **The affects of lockout**

When the lockout ended all the teachers were re-appointed to their jobs. Hereby they were reinstated with the symbolic mandate to take up their daily work as teachers. Coming back to school most of the teachers were celebrated and greeted with a warm welcome, from the school principalship, the pupils and the parents. Schools were decorated with billboards of ‘Welcome or ‘We missed you’ a mutual response to the teachers’ declaration of love. And shortly after, business went on as usual as the new working hour regulations and not upcoming school reform would not be put into action until more than one year later. But the reactions of the teachers, shown in the percentage of teachers considering leaving their profession or the increased number of teachers with absence of stress related illness, indicate that the lockout in did indeed have immediate effects. This also shows in the interviews with teachers and school principals, who point out how some teachers react as kind of traumatized by the lockout, as they talk about physical and emotional reactions that refuse to go away, but which may be re-actualized whenever they are supposed to work with issues regarding the implementation of future reform. For instance some school principals talk about how some teachers started crying at meeting where they were supposed to discuss the future reform. Below a female teacher explains how the experience is still in her body, and how she is unable to get rid of it and move on:

“I am extremely provoked, when people say that now we have to move on. I can’t! And I think it is because in my field there are many who are passionately involved in their work, and who have chosen it because we think that we struggle and we fail sometimes and we get up again, and it is incredibly tough, and people break down with stress and all sorts of things. But what we survive on is the recognition. Everybody needs that”,

Another female teacher tells a similar story and explains how KL had turned the public opinion against the teachers:

“What KL did was to show the population that “[the teachers] are a bunch of whiners, and now we have to put them in place once and for all, and at any time you may call them whatever you think they are”. They helped the population doing that, and they held us for as long as they could, and then sent us back to arrange exams. And we fought working double to make that happen [...] lots of people are not over it yet. The degradation that was in it, made us feel like second class people. [...] The teachers fought for public recognition. They fought for other things as well. But I think this turned out to be the issue of greatest importance” (female teacher, locked out)

Several teachers tell similar stories of how they are still hit by a feeling of humiliation and misrecognition. And some have stopped telling people that they work as teachers in order not to be confronted with the possible reactions or signs of disrespect or at least lack of understanding of the issue of the lockout. All in all most of the teachers, we have talked to, refers to the emotional pressure, they experience in being member of a professional group whom they feel has been subjected to public humiliation and disrespect, or as this male teacher says:

“When I’m at the school teaching, I don’t think much about it. It’s more when I’m at home or talking to someone about it, or when we talk in the lunch room. Then the thought pop up: okay, what’s going to happen? What’s it going to be like? Can I stand it in the long run? Those are thoughts I’ve had. [...] Will I be able to stand being a teacher for so many years, because you are stepped on by all the big guys, and you have no say. Not that the reform is a bad thing. It’s just that you’re not being listened to.”

In a Lacanian reading recognition always implies misrecognition, as the subject only gets a positive identity through ‘recognition’ in the form of subjectivation or interpellation into the symbolic order, which is driven by lack. But the subject is never fully identical to its subject position which is why interpellation also always implied misrecognition. And it is within this space between the subject and its subject position that desire is produced by fantasy.

Fantasy appears then, as an answer to ‘Che vuoi?’, to the unbearable enigma of the desire of the Other, of the lack in the Other. But it is at the same time fantasy itself which, so to speak provides the co-ordinates of our desire – which constructs the frame enabling us to desire something [...] through fantasy we learn ‘how to desire’ (Žižek 1989: 118)

The analytical point here is, once again, how the teachers’ expressions of lack of recognition, even to the degree of humiliation, is not to be understood as refraining from identifying with the gaze of the other and the fantasy of teaching. Rather it might be read as an intensification of the hysterical question of what the other wants? – and of the fantasy of possible and full



recognition which will, once and for all, satisfy desire. The increased hysteria of the question for some teacher, may both stem from having been barred from their symbolic position, but also from the fact that they do not yet have any specific experiences of how the new working hour agreement or school reform will look like, and not least, what will be expected. Looking at the social or symbolic level the new working hour regulation implies two specific changes for the working hours of the teachers: On an average each teacher has to teach another 2 lessons a week. Furthermore the working hours shift from being fixed through the assignment of tasks, to being fixed to being present at school within specific working hours, e.g. from 8 to 16 o'clock. Still they keep on asking themselves what this actually *means* or – as we would put it – what is it that the Other sees in me that makes me a teacher. As a female teacher puts it:

“The work load is what it is. Some teachers go down because of that. If I ever go down, it wouldn't be because of that. It would be the violation in having to do something I don't believe in. This and lack of recognition”

This teacher fully accepts the argument that a restrained financial situation in the public sector requires her and her colleagues to work harder. At stake is her feeling of violation and lack of recognition of the importance, value and the intensity of the work carried out by her and her fellow teachers. In this perspective the rearrangement not only concerns time and work, but also enjoyment and desire. She continues:

“I'm always working, because there are some poor fates in these classes. For some of them we are the primary adult, and I take on over-responsibility in wanting to save those children – I know that. It is such a challenge to sleep at night as a teacher. But I want it! I want to be their primary adult, if they don't have one. But if I'm banged on my head and called a lazy pig, then I won't!”

For this teacher, teaching simply is 'it' (Zizek, 1989, 96). She strongly identifies with a fantasy of the teacher as caretaker, and the idea of love as a sacrifice, which in itself produces enjoyment (Bramming & Johnsen 2011 Zizek, 1992, 160):

‘(...) true sacrifice is for its own end; you must find positive fulfilment in the sacrifice itself, not in its instrumental value: it is this renunciation, this giving up of enjoyment itself, which produces a certain surplus-enjoyment’ (Zizek 1989: 82)

Here we need to stress how the Lacanian understanding of enjoyment is not to be equalled with pleasure. Rather it may exactly be the sacrifice or the suffering of following the Law which produces enjoyment. But it is within this ‘administration of enjoyment’ (Glynos & Howard 2004 In: Contu & Willmott 2008; 1773) that the lockout seems to have introduced a

certain instability or insecurity of the answer to the question of ‘what the Other want’ which also implies that the enjoyment of pursuing professional desire may be turned into transgression. For some this insecurity is expressed in an even more hysterical questioning of whether what the Other sees in me is a lazy pig rather than an over responsible professional. And this again may be translated into the feeling that this imaginary identification of professionalism is unbearable to the extent that one cannot identify oneself as a teacher at all.

### Reconfiguring professional desire

Following this line of thinking we suggest that the affects of the lockout is a reconfiguration of the fantasy of the desire of the other which threatens the logic or administration of enjoyment which they have hitherto engaged in and by which their professional desire has been structured and lived out. And for some teachers this reconfiguration of desire and enjoyment not only relates to the ‘economy of – professional – desire’ (Glynos and Stavrakakis 2004, 210; In: Contu & Wilmott 2007; 1773) of but their life as such. A female teacher says:

“The flexibility, the freedom, the creativity, the very way in which I have been used to organize my life, is being changed. It simply restricts my personal freedom to organize my life. I’m very, very frustrated about this.”

What has changed is not only the Law – in the literal sense – regulating the relationship between time and work. It is also the fantasy of the desire of the Other which seem to have been severely shaken through the ideological othering of the teachers and questioning of professional enjoyment produced through the ideological fantasy of ‘normalisation’ supporting the campaign of the KL. Talking to the teachers about the meaning and consequences of the lockout and the new regulation of working time, it seems that they are indeed affected more within the logic of enjoyment, than by the specific changes brought about by the new regulation of working hours and working tasks.

And again they try to argue – not with the alleged, albeit no less ideological ‘fact’ that they should teach more – but rather with the fantasy of teachers’ enjoyment. One of the points made by KL not only concerned how teachers enjoyed short working hours and long holidays, but also the flexibility of working more when the pupils attended school and less during the

long school holidays. This provoked some teachers to counter the idea of flexibility as a privilege:

“Let’s have a holiday system like everyone else. I don’t understand why we haven’t started there rather than talking about other things. Why do we have to have these long holidays, we haven’t asked for it. Let’s have a holiday regulation like everyone else, so that we can have the flexibility of placing our holiday at the time where we want it and where it fits in. That would be meaningful. That holiday system is very old fashioned. We do not have to go out digging up potatoes or helping in the field anymore. All this closing down for summer holiday and starting up again – let’s stop it. The parents take their kids out for vacation, whenever it suits them anyway”

In this part of the interview, the teacher is quite clearly trying to counter the fantasy of teachers enjoying the privilege of long holidays that normal hardworking employees do not have access to. She turns the argument around, and claims that first of all teachers did not ask for long holidays, second the arrangement is not flexible (rather it is the ‘normal’ people who enjoy flexible holidays, not because, but in spite of the official organisation of the school year), and finally the teachers do not enjoy these long holidays at all, actually they basically find long summer holidays troublesome. Quite contrarily, teachers enjoy working, not being off on holiday, the argument goes. This also counts for the workday where this teacher finds it quite annoying when her school is closed and the alarm set at five o’clock in the afternoon; This is when you feel thrown – or maybe even literally locked – out. The fantasy that she tries counter is again the fantasy of teachers’ enjoyment as related to working as little as possible by setting a scene where enjoyment is related to work and holidays in the same way as the ‘parents’ as a whole.

That the prospects of the new working hour regulation affects some of the teachers deeply is also noted by one of the school principals who explains how it is not just a question of the amount and distribution of working hours , it is also about mourning the loss of a dream of a certain lifestyle. One of the male teachers puts it this way:

“I think, that if it was 3 or 4 days a week until 16, I think people could live with that. But I think the problem right now is the insecurity: Is it 5 days a week until 17, because we have to work 41 hours a week? How then is my life going to be possible, when I also have to pick up kids and whatever else?”

In other cases the worries are linked directly to the pursuing their enjoyment of being a teacher – even and maybe even as this enjoyment has implied sacrifice:

“People are scared they may not be able to do all the things they usually do, because if they have to go home at 16. What if you’re not done? And you have all these things you had to do. What then?”

Like several others this teacher asks the (hysterical) question of what the Other wants, by pointing to the split between the topside and the underside of the Law. Below this dilemma is formulated as a split between the loyalty towards children, their parents and on the other hand being loyal to your colleagues:

“It’s going to be very difficult from august 2014, because it is important for me to show solidarity with my colleagues, and that means not answering my phone after 16 pm, and then I suddenly become a time meter. And I feel that I am forced to, because it is required of me, somehow. So I am going to be extremely split between a loyalty towards some children and parents, that I really want to help and be there for (...) and being loyal towards my field and my colleagues. We often talk about the situation of having to be at work till 16.00 or 16.30, and then having to go home. Because a lot of my colleagues will not have time to prepare. And then what? Am I just going to teach something I haven’t prepared, or should I go home and work in secrecy?”

Here the question echoes again: What if they have to stay at the school every day until 17? What if they have to teach something they haven’t had time to prepare? What if a pupil in trouble calls upon them outside their official working hours? In a fantasmatic realm what used to be regarded as legitimate signs of ‘true love’ for the children and as such for the profession may now be turned into a secret love affair. In that case pursuing her investment and enjoyment in being a good teacher appears as a transgression - not only of the Law demanding her to work from 8 - 16, but even more so of her solidarity with her colleagues. Though as we pointed out above, such transgression is not a threat to the Law, rather it is exactly this form of transgression which works as a prerequisite for upholding the Law (Contu & Wilmott 2007; Contu, 2008; Zizek, 1997). In this light what might really present a challenge to the new work time arrangement would be teachers working "by the book" from 8 - 16, no more and no less (Fleming and Sewell 2002; Zizek 1997).

## Teaching in a deadlock

This paper presents the preliminary findings of pursuing the affective effects of the lockout in an ideological perspective. It shows that for some teachers the lockout means for being caught between a traumatic past and a future framed by fantasies of what future might bring in the form of turning fantasies of professional desire upside down. Not only were the teachers locked out from their teaching position they or at least their way of structuring enjoyment was pointed out as the symptom standing in the way not only of school reform, but of the possible and full realisation of pupil potential. Moreover the affective aftermath of the lockout both contains the trauma of the near past, but also the anxiety of how one may possible pursue

professional and private desires when the new working hour regulation is put in place. Again the consequences are not only metered out in the distribution of working tasks and working time. It is also concerns the question of whether the coordinates of professional desire needs to be reset through a reconfiguration of the fantasy of the desire of the Other in relation to the teaching profession. This may be observed in the reactions of the teachers where the - literal - confrontation with the Law (of the regulation of working hours) seems not only to alter the structure of the working day, but a hysterical questioning of how to set the coordinates of professional desire and enjoyment.

Apart from developing the analysis of the teachers reactions to the lockout, one might also turn the analytical lens towards the big Other, as it is not only the subject, but also the Other or the social reality which is constituted around a lack, or as Žižek put it, around ‘the real of antagonism’ (Žižek 2005; 256). Here Žižek points out how fantasy both takes the form about a state of harmony without disruptions, and the fantasy of what irritates me about the other, and how fantasy 1 and fantasy 2 are:

(...) front and reverse of the same coin: Insofar as a community experiences its reality as regulated, structured by fantasy, it has to disavow its inherent impossibility, the antagonism in its very heart – and fantasy2 gives body to this disavowal. In short, the effectiveness of fantasy2 is the condition of fantasy1 to maintain its hold. (Žižek 2005; 266)

We already pointed to the relationship between ‘fantasy 1’ and ‘fantasy 2’ as the fantasy1 being the fantasy of a school in which the potential of all pupils would be realised – (regardless of any differences), and the fantasy2 took form in the production of the teachers of ‘the conceptual Jew’ as the symptom blocking the full realisation of fantasy1 and producing irritation about his enjoyment.

We still need to address, however, what could be the ‘antagonism in the very heart’. If we focus on the constituting antagonism of the school ‘as such’, we might point to the antagonism between school as producing sameness and equality and school as (re)producing difference and inequality (Bjerg 2011). But we might also ask *what if* it is not school, but indeed teaching ‘as such’ which is founded on an inherent antagonism, we might get an idea of why it is that the fantasy2 of teachers as indulging in abnormal enjoyment seemed so obvious. Here we would suggest seeing the constituting antagonism of teaching as the relationship between different forms of what we would call ‘economies’, which are by and

large regarded as not only antagonistic, but even mutually exclusive. On the one hand there is an emotional economy based on 'true love' and where the teaching profession is regarded as a vocation and meted out as sincere expressions of care for the children whom is brought under the care of the teacher. Within such emotional economy the exchange of love and care is pr. definition something which money cannot buy. Quite the contrary – if money gets involved the love is no longer true, but perverted. On the other hand there is an economy of money (and time) in which teaching is a wage labour 'like any other', and where the exchange is an exchange of time/skills and payment. Within this economy the exchange of time and money is exactly based on the form of objectification of care and skills which the relationship between working hours and payment represents. We have seen how the teachers react when getting a hint of this antagonism – they intensify the hysterical questioning of the Other as well as start fantasizing of the other of the Other in the form of 'faceless bureaucrats' etc.

This other, hidden Law acts the part of the 'Other of the Other' in the Lacanian sense, the part of the meta-guarantee of the consistency of the big Other (the symbolic order that regulates social life). The 'conspiracy-theory' prove as guarantee that the field of the big Other is not an inconsistent bricolage. (Zizek 2005; 250)

In this reading the lockout of the teachers may also give a glimpse of the constituting antagonism of teaching: that they love their job and they love our children, and they do it for money.

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<sup>i</sup> Our work with this paper indicates that we should dwell more on an overall analysis of the teaching profession in an ideological perspective, an aspect which we have not yet explored fully.